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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [LE](#) [SY](#) [TU](#)
SUBJECT: TURKEY'S PARTICIPATION IN LEBANON SIDE MEETING

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Classified By: Political Counselor Janice G. Weiner, reasons 1.4 b, d

(C) Post requests that the Department consider including Turkey in the side meeting on Lebanon at the upcoming Iraq Expanded Neighbors Ministerial in Istanbul, November 2-3 (ref A). One focal point of GOT regional foreign policy efforts has been on increasing stability in Lebanon. PM Erdogan frequently communicates with PM Siniora, who plans to visit Ankara in mid-November. During his recent tour of Middle East countries, FM Babacan, in Beirut, underscored the importance of peaceful elections in Lebanon with GOL and opposition leadership. He did so with officials in neighboring capitals as well. GOT leaders press the SARG to play a more constructive role in Lebanon. Turkey is a troop contributor to UNIFIL. In May, it increased its participation in UNIFIL's maritime component. GOT policy reinforces U.S. interests in Lebanon. As the host of the Ministerial and a nation expanding its ties with the Arab League (Turkey and the Arab League will sign an MOU on November 2), Turkey's participation in the side meeting could prove beneficial.

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